



What is it?

Points To Remember About Ichthyosis

- Ichthyosis causes dry, thickened skin that may look like fish scales.
- The disease is usually passed down from your parents.
- Ichthyosis is treated by dermatologists who are doctors trained to diagnose and treat diseases of the skin, hair, and nails.
- Creams, lotions, or ointments can relieve dryness or itching. Salt or aspirin dissolved in water, or over-the-counter lotions containing urea, may also ease scaling.
- For more severe cases, doctors may prescribe certain forms of vitamin A.

Ichthyosis is a disorder that causes dry, thickened skin that may look like fish scales.

The disease is usually passed down from your parents. Symptoms usually start showing up at about one year of age. The disease affects you throughout life.

Who gets it?

The disease is usually passed down from your parents. If you have ichthyosis, you probably started showing signs before you turned one year old.

What are the symptoms?

The most common signs of ichthyosis are dry and scaly skin, redness, blisters, or too much skin coming off. You might feel hot, as well as itching and pain.

Doctors may identify ichthyosis by the gene that causes it, although symptoms can usually place the disease into one of five categories:

- **Ichthyosis vulgaris:** mild skin scaling and dryness.
- **Epidermolytic ichthyosis (previously called epidermolytic hyperkeratosis):** thick, often spiny dark scales and skin that may blister easily.
- **Lamellar ichthyosis:** large, platelike scales and thickening of the skin.
- **Congenital ichthyosiform erythroderma:** red skin and fine scales.
- **Localized ichthyosis:** thick or scaly skin in certain areas, such as the palms of the hands and soles of the feet.

What causes it?

Ichthyosis is usually caused by certain faulty genes that are from one or both of your parents. Your parents may not show signs of the disease.

Is there a test?

Your doctor will test for ichthyosis by looking at your skin and asking you questions about your health. Your doctor may also take blood or skin samples to test for the condition or identify the particular form.

How is it treated?

There is no cure for ichthyosis. Treatment can include creams, lotions, or ointments to relieve dryness or itching. Salt or aspirin dissolved in water, or over-the-counter lotions containing urea, may also ease scaling. For more severe cases, doctors may prescribe certain forms of vitamin A.

Who treats it?

Ichthyosis is treated by a dermatologist, a doctor trained to diagnose and treat diseases of the skin, hair, and nails.

For More Info

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Toll free: 888-INFO-FDA (888-463-6332)

Website: <https://www.fda.gov>

Drugs@FDA at <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/daf>. Drugs@FDA is a searchable catalog of FDA-approved drug products.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics

Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

American Academy of Dermatology

Website: <https://www.aad.org>

Foundation for Ichthyosis and Related Skin Types, Inc.

Website: <https://www.firstskinfoundation.org>

National Registry for Ichthyosis and Related Disorders

Website: <https://depts.washington.edu/ichreg/ichthyosis.registry>

If you need more information about available resources in your language or other languages, please visit our webpages below or contact the NIAMS Information Clearinghouse at NIAMSInfo@mail.nih.gov.

- [Asian Language Health Information](#)
- [Spanish Language Health Information](#)

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